

LAKE ANNE VILLAGE CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

Fairfax County, Virginia



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LAKE ANNE VILLAGE CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

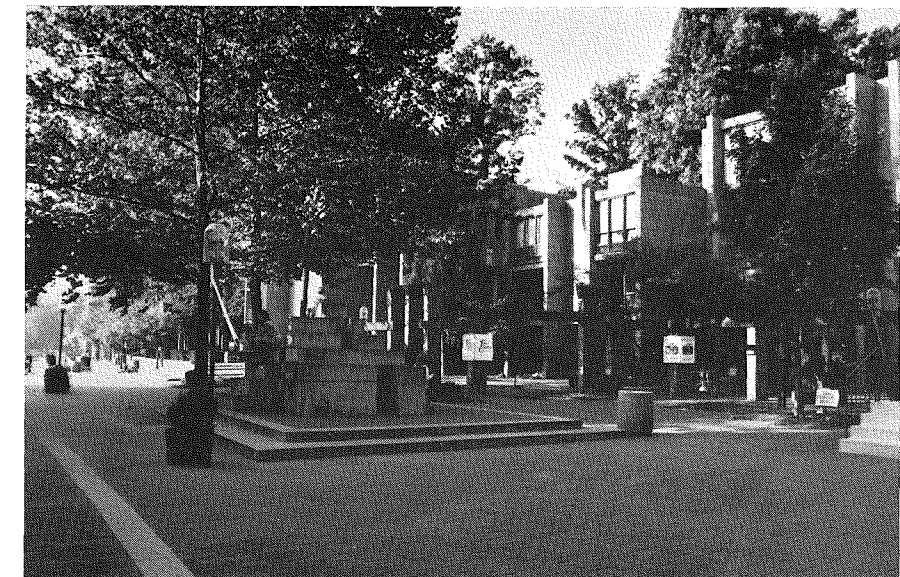


Fairfax County, Virginia

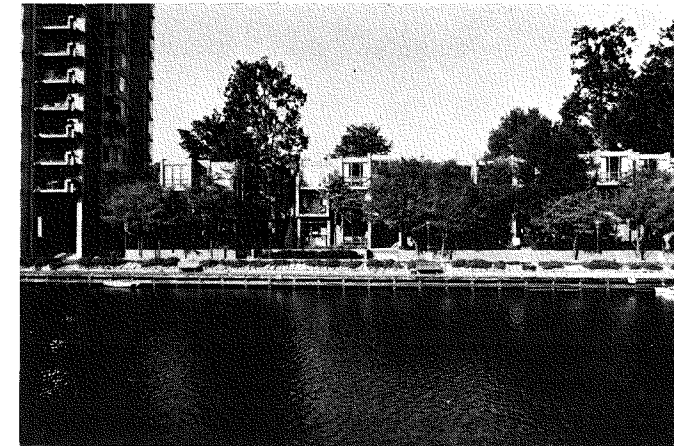
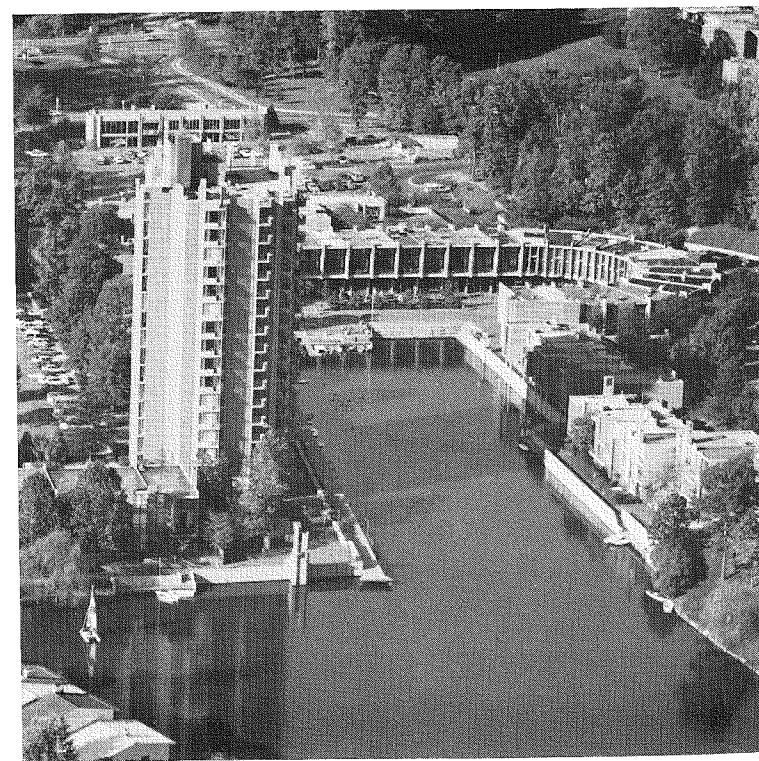
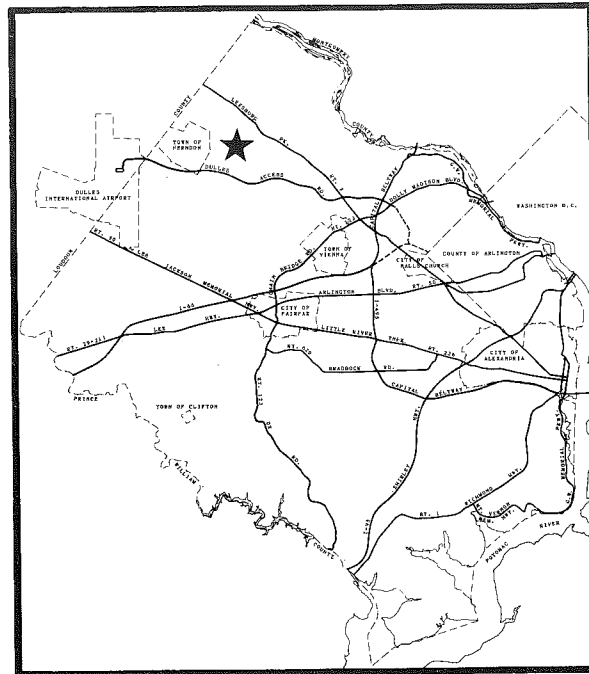
October 1983

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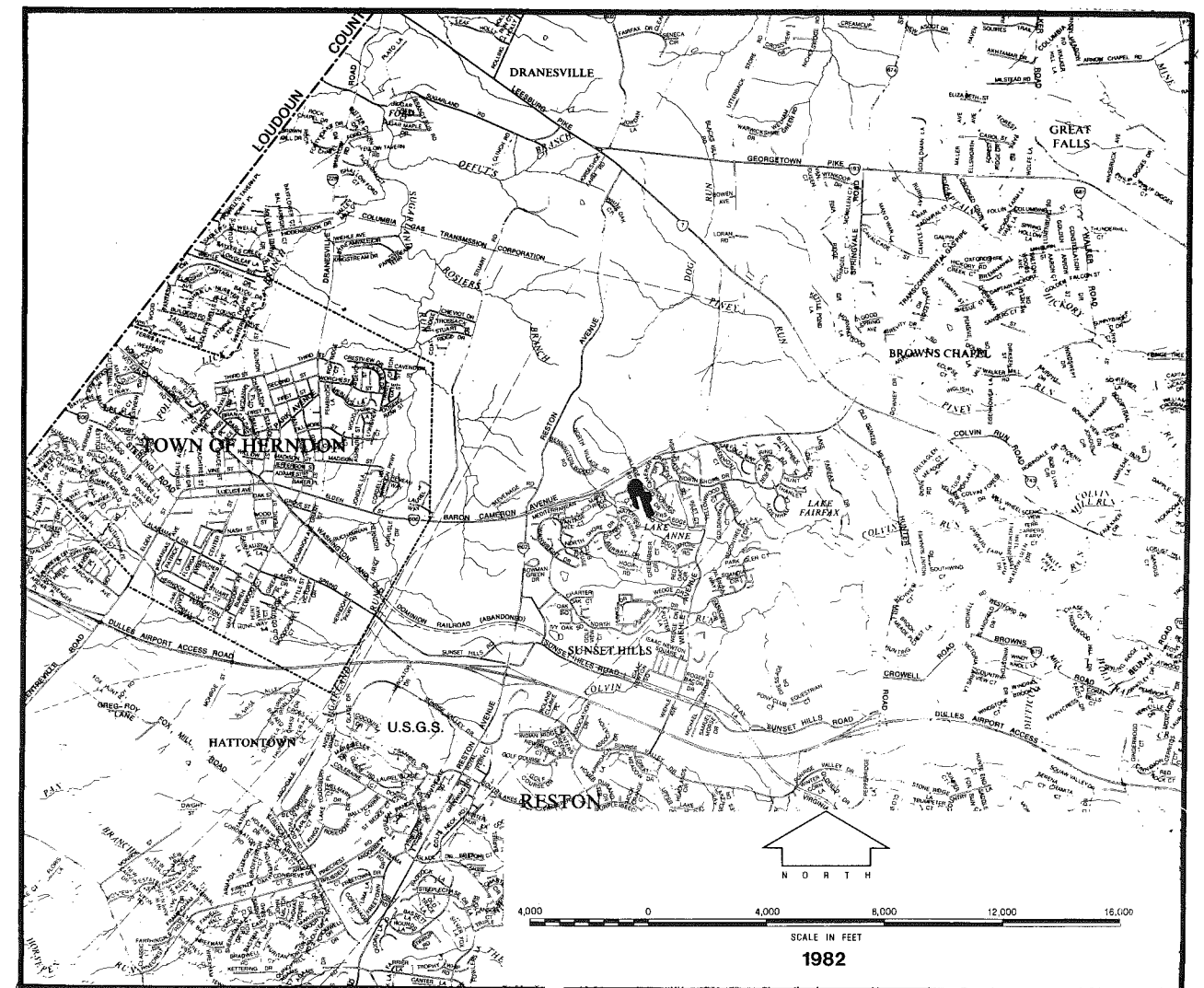
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Location Map



Vicinity Map





Preface

The creation of historic districts was authorized by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in order to protect and enhance the county's historic and architectural landmarks. These sites are not only valuable but vulnerable — vulnerable to incompatible nearby development and vulnerable too to pressures for change as their economic viability seems to lessen. The creation of a historic district affords protection by ensuring that all new development and any exterior alteration to existing structures will be compatible. After final adoption by the Board of Supervisors, a historic district is administered by the Architectural Review Board.

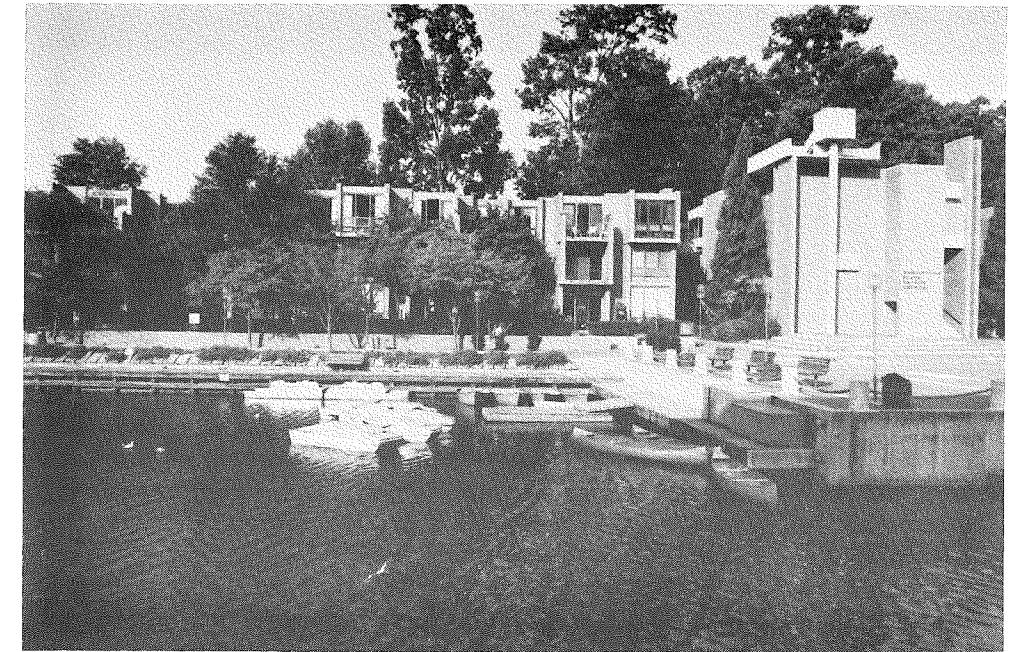
The Lake Anne Village Center Historic District is the eleventh such district proposed within Fairfax County.

Recommendations for the Village Center stress retention of the area as originally planned and designed.



The Property

The Lake Anne Village Center, Reston's first such center, is a mixture of commercial and residential uses, sited around the northern tip of a man-made lake. It includes retail stores, a high-rise building, a church, apartments, and townhouses, built between 1965 and 1967. The residential and commercial units are now owned on a condominium basis and they are in generally good condition.



Historic and Architectural Significance

"No piece of Northern Virginia real estate was more praised and honored in the 1960s than Reston's Lake Anne Plaza." So begins an article in the March 14, 1981 edition of *The Washington Post*.

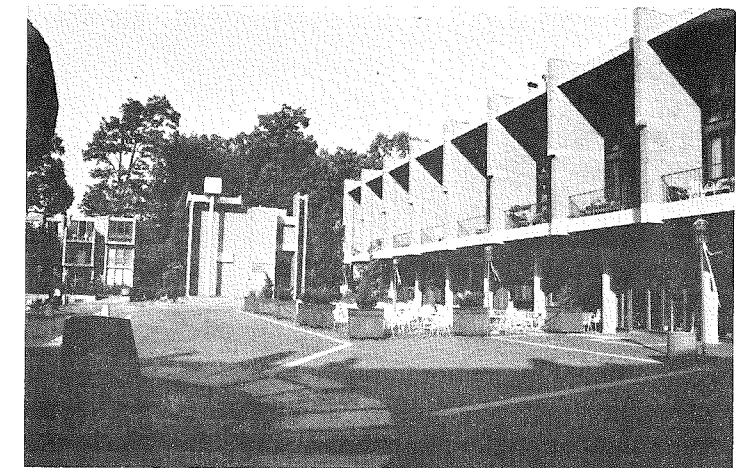
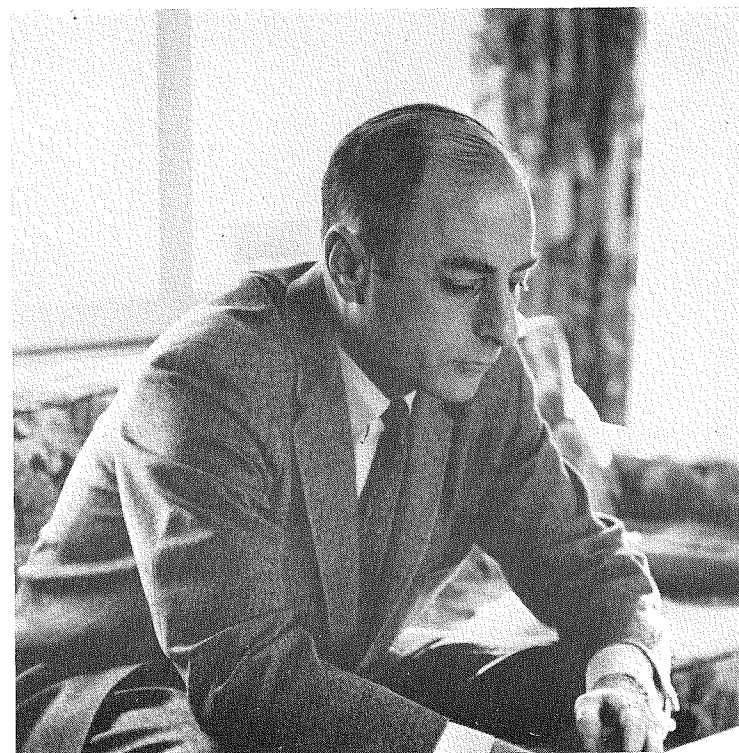
This piece of real estate has had a distinguished history. The land belonged to the Fairfax family until 1848. In the 1880s Dr. C.A. Wiehle owned the land on which he envisioned and began a planned town along nineteenth-century German models. A hotel, residence, town hall, and a few other buildings were actually constructed but Dr. Wiehle's untimely death also meant the end of the town of Wiehle. Beginning in 1927 the A. Smith Bowman family became owners of the land. The business of the estate was the growing of cattle, horses, and grains. Following the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, the Bowmans turned their grain into another use—the manufacture of "Virginia Gentleman" and "Fairfax County" bourbons. By the end of the 1950s the rapidly growing urbanization of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area left the Bowmans' more than 7,000 acres the largest single tract in the area. The Bowmans themselves made plans to develop a satellite city, but eventually decided instead to sell the land.

Early in 1961 the land became the property of Robert E. Simon, purchased by him with the proceeds of the sale of New York's Carnegie Hall. Simon had long been acquainted with what was called the "garden city" movement, both in England and the United States. Indeed his father had participated in the development of Radburn, New Jersey, America's first garden city. He planned to use that experience as a background for his new development.

Robert E. Simon had many goals in mind; among these were that people be able to live and work in the same community and that beauty — structural and natural — should be fostered. His personal involvement with the project is reflected in the choice of its name, "Reston," formed from his initials and the English suffix for town. The first of the planned village centers was to be built around a man-made lake and named for his wife, Anne.

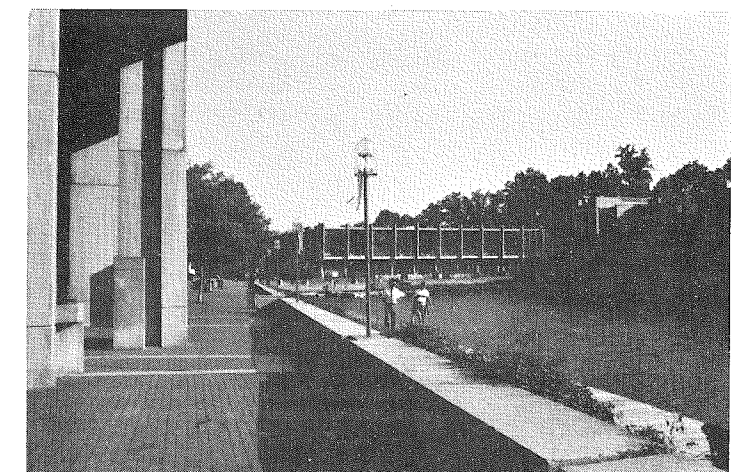
To develop the architectural design of the Lake Anne Village Center Simon chose the New York firm of Whittlesey and Conklin, a firm with much experience in imaginative land use. An important early decision was to install such amenities as the lake, golf course, and riding stable even before construction of housing units. In the spring of 1963 work was begun on the Lake Anne dam, allowing the waters of Colvin Run to fill the twenty-seven acre lake. James Rossant of the Whittlesey and Conklin firm assumed major responsibility for Washington Plaza, designing the storefronts, the sculptured fountain on the plaza, and the water jet fountain in the lake. Speaking about his goals for the center Rossant said:

We want to create the village center with a sense of the past. We felt that the location was a dramatic one, adding depth to the European coastal town feeling we were striving for in our overall design.

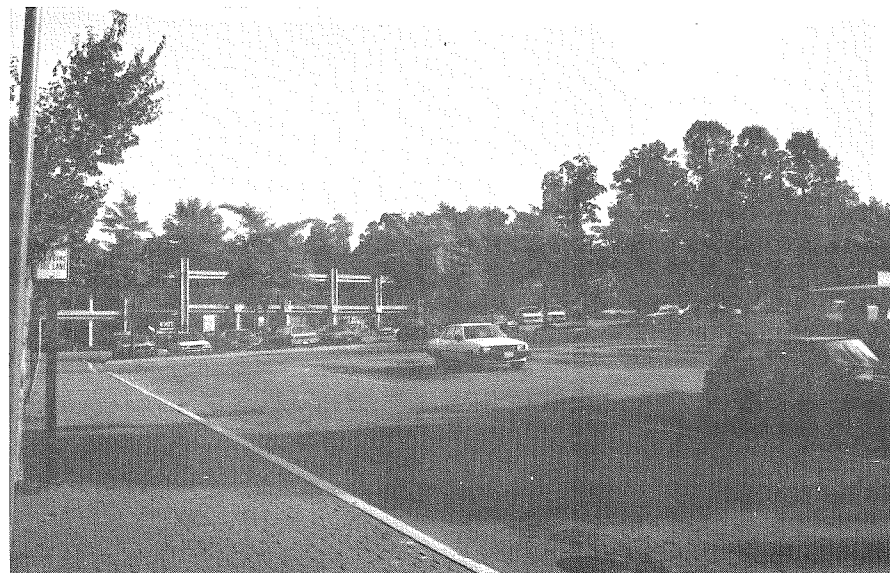
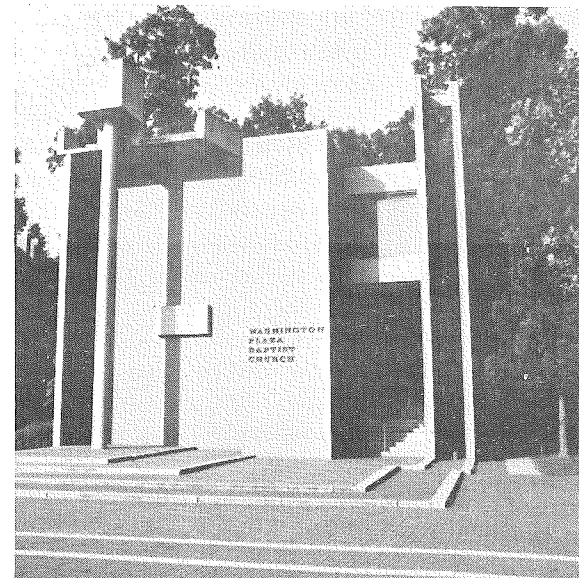
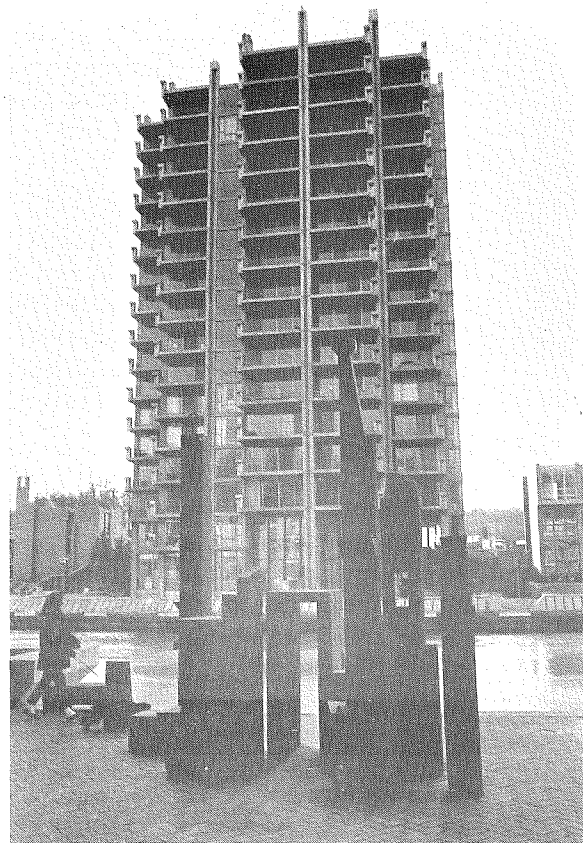


It was indeed an unusual design for the American suburban landscape. Apartments were placed over shops, near a high-rise apartment building and even some lake-front townhouses. Rossant stressed the human scale of the composition in an enclosed area fronting on water and totally free of the automobile. All parking was relegated to the rear of the plaza, behind the buildings. Pedestrian access from the parking lot brought the visitor or shopper onto the plaza and past a stone pyramid playhouse sculpted by Gonzales Fonseca, and to a superb view of the lake. The response of visitors was overwhelmingly positive, and the visitors included students, planners, architectural critics, sociologists, and real estate developers. The concept of Reston caught their imagination as a creative answer to suburban monotony, and the plaza itself gained international acclaim. Architectural critic Wolf Von Eckhardt compared his experience of coming onto the plaza to the discovery of the Piazza San Marco in Venice: "... it is not a mere square but a grand hall with the open sky its ceiling and the lake providing an ever-changing dimension and well-framed kinetic mural."

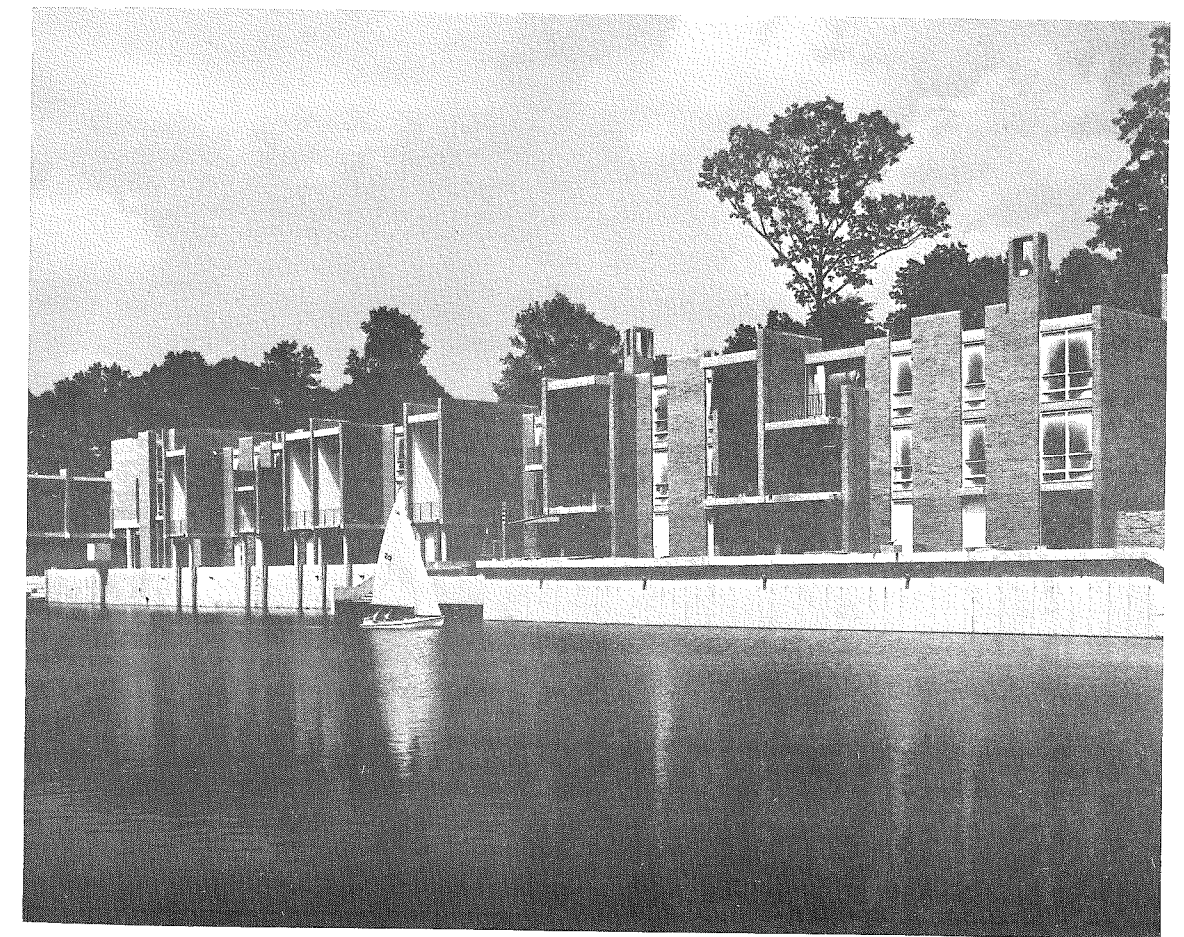
Lake Anne Village Center officially opened on December 4, 1965, with a day-long celebration which was duly noted by the press. The *New York Times* architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable praised Simon's achievement, citing the collaboration of the developer and Fairfax County, a county with growth problems.



Washington Plaza Structures



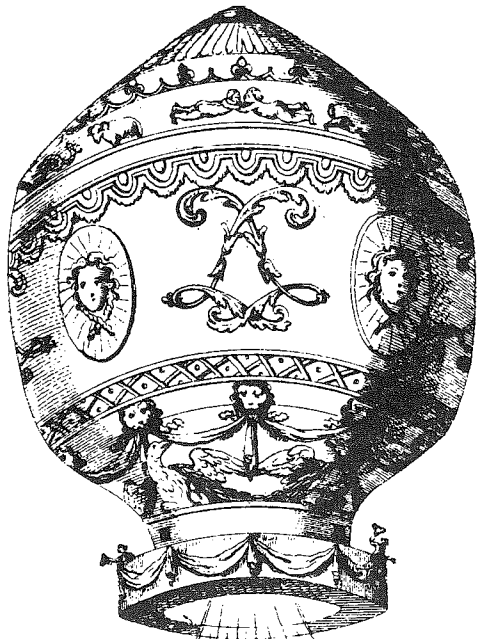
and Spaces



The Lake Anne Village Center and many of its individual buildings have won many awards, honored by, among others, the American Institute of Architects, the Metropolitan Washington Board of Trade, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Now, in 1983, the twenty-year old plaza is faced with new challenges to its economic survival. Control of Reston land had shifted from Simon to the Gulf Oil Corporation. In 1980 Gulf sold its undeveloped lands to the Mobil Oil Corporation, and sold twenty of its income-producing properties — including the Lake Anne Village Center — to the Bethesda, Maryland, investment firm of Donatelli and Klein. The center is now a mixed-use condominium and rehabilitation is underway. It is hoped that this will attract merchants back to the plaza and result in a much-needed economic revitalization.

The Lake Anne Village Center is one of the great landmarks of the “new town” movement that so excited architects and planners. It is crucial that the excellence of its design be recognized and that every effort be made to safeguard it. Official national recognition is being sought by the initiation of a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.



UP, UP & AWAY
RESTON
REDEDICATION FESTIVAL
May 23-24, 1970

PROGRAM

May 23, 1970 — 11 a.m.

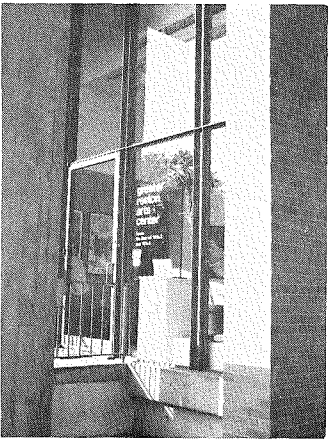
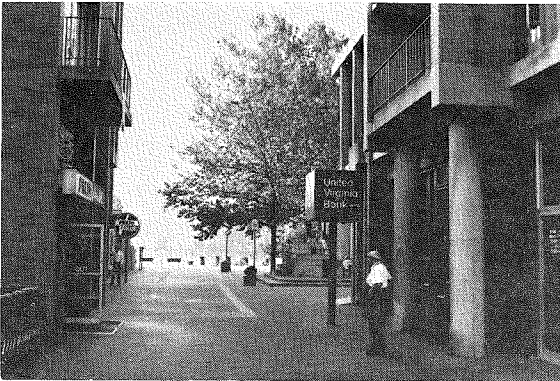
Patrick Hayes, Reston's First Master of Ceremonies, Presiding
Managing Director, Washington Performing Arts Society

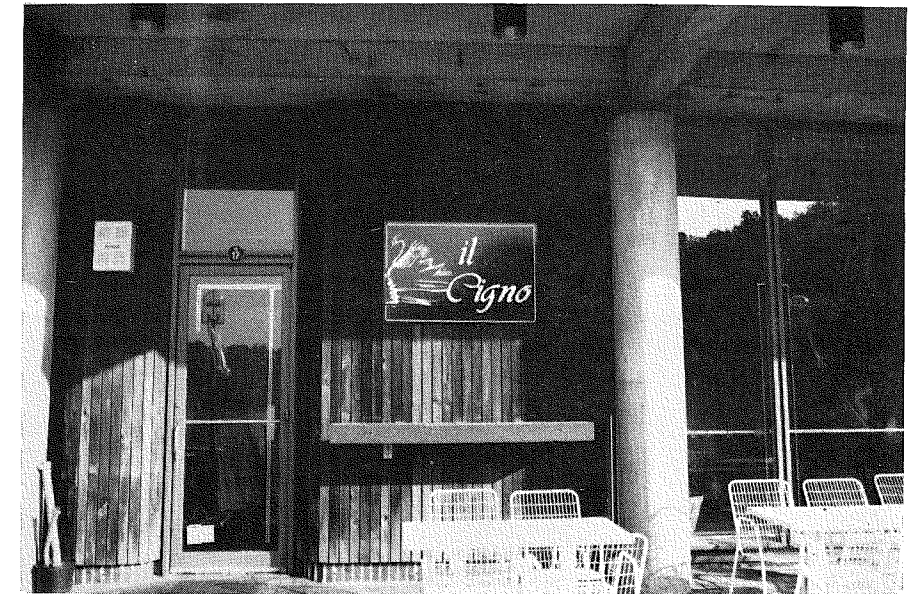
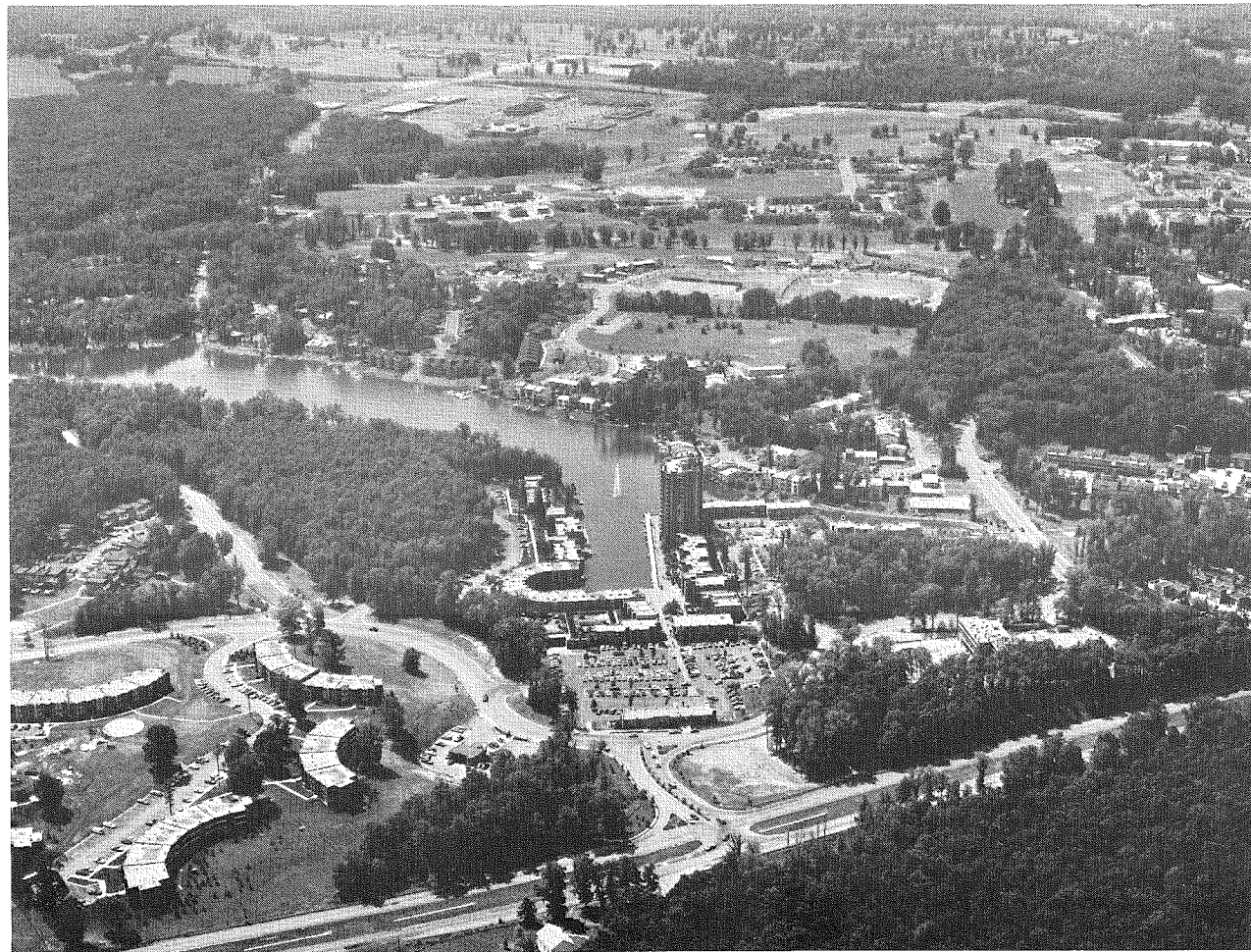
Selections	Herndon High School Band Larry Willis, Director
The National Anthem	
Invocation	Rev. William Scurlock, Pastor Washington Plaza Baptist Church
Introduction of Distinguished Guests	
Welcome	Victoria Westphal, Festival Chairman
Reston Community Association Awards	Gene Bergoffen, President Reston Community Association
"The Dedication of Reston".	Anne W. Simon (Read by Robert M. Perce, Jr., President, Homeowners' Association)
Remarks	Robert E. Simon, Jr. Founder of Reston
Remarks	William H. Magness, President Gulf Reston, Inc.
Dedicatory Address	Samuel C. Jackson Assistant Secretary for Metropolitan Development Department of Housing and Urban Development
Benediction	Rev. J. Robert Regan, Jr., Pastor Redeemer Methodist Church

Immediately following the program, the Town Portrait will be taken.
Programs courtesy of the Reston Business and Professional Association.

Current Plans and Zoning

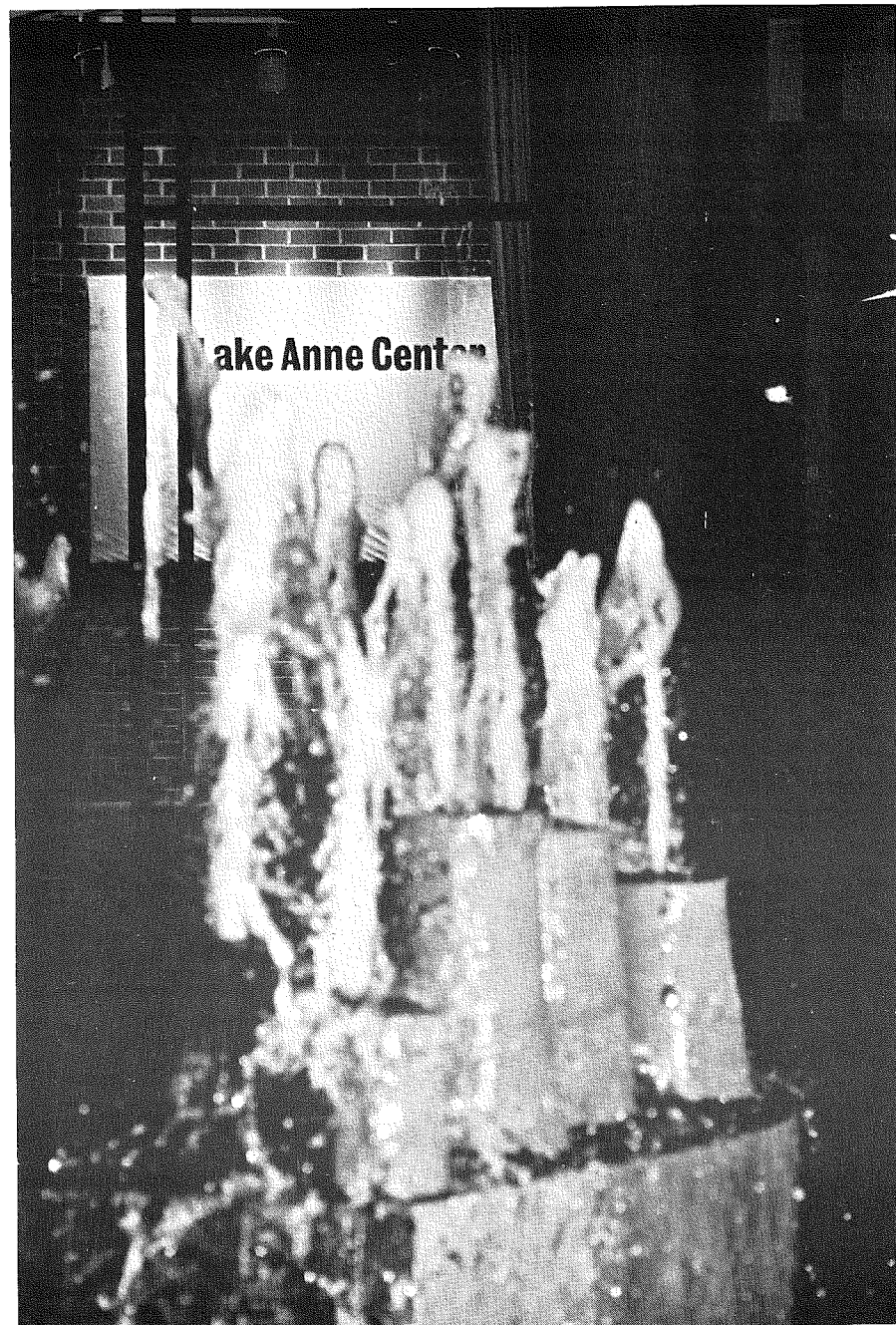
The land in the proposed Lake Anne Village Center Historic District is in the UP5, Reston Community Planning Sector. Its use is governed by the Area III Plan which shows it as a village center. The underlying zoning is PRC — Planned Residential Community. The language of the zoning ordinance describes PRC regulations as flexible, “intended to provide an opportunity and incentive to the developer to achieve excellence in physical, social and economic planning.” Such a development may include areas designated for residential, neighborhood convenience center, village center, town center, and convention/conference center. As described in the zoning ordinance, the village center is a central location of activity of retail, community, and leisure uses on a scale serving a number of neighborhoods, easily accessible to both vehicles and pedestrians. Within such a center, the primary emphasis should be on the pedestrian circulation system. Suggested uses include professional offices, a supermarket, restaurant, and specialty shops. The PRC category itself was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1978 and evolved from the 1962 RPC designation. Its purpose is to allow for orderly, planned, and controlled growth of large areas. Simon's planners, working with a local attorney, proposed this original PRC zoning ordinance category.





Development Trends

A column in the *Washington Post* in 1981 described the early scene at Lake Anne: "The plaza's city-in-the-suburbs atmosphere with people shopping, dining, schmoozing, boating, fishing, or just hanging out in one big crazy guilt of activity" In recent years, however, this scene has given way to vacant shops, leaky roofs, and hard times. Economic revitalization is needed to restore the plaza to its original role and appearance. As a consequence, the buildings are vulnerable to a "quick-fix" to render them income-producing. This significantly increases the threat to the original design of the building facades which, as has been described, are of award-winning architectural caliber.



Historic District

The following factors indicate the need to establish a historic district to protect the Lake Anne Village Center:

The historic significance of the center, the internationally recognizable symbol of Reston, pioneer of the "new town movement."

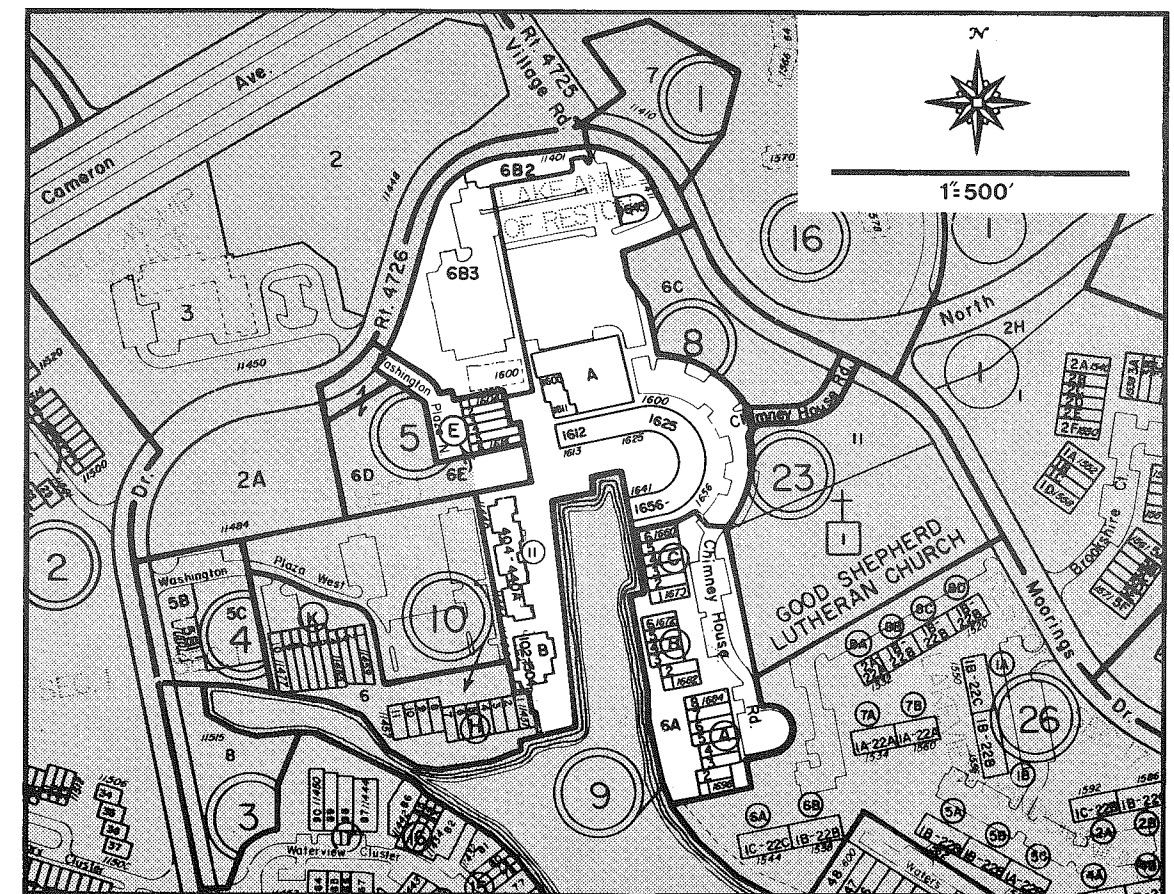
The architectural quality of the buildings and sculpture, as attested to by the many awards given to the plaza and its individual buildings.

The need to protect the area from adverse environmental influences.

The need to ensure that any future development within the area will be compatible in use and scale with the existing development.

The need to protect the original vistas from and of the plaza.

The currently depressed nature of the center with the consequence of increased vulnerability of the buildings for inappropriate adaptation to provide an income-producing use.



Recommendations

The following policies are recommended in order to protect and enhance the Lake Anne Village Center.

- Uses should be in accordance with the original plans for commercial, residential, and public uses.
- The pattern of commercial frontage on the lake and the restriction to pedestrian access should be strictly followed.
- All signs should be in conformance with the provisions of Article 12 of the Zoning Ordinance and should reflect the commercial vitality of the area.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ACTIONS

- Adoption of a declaration that the Lake Anne Village Center has both historic and architectural significance requiring protection against destruction and encroachment.
- Adoption of the Lake Anne Village Historic District report which substantiates the architectural and historical significance of the complex.
- Adoption of provisions for the Lake Anne Village Center Historic Overlay District by amending Appendix I of the Zoning Ordinance to add a new Part II.



PART II A1-1100 LAKE ANNE VILLAGE CENTER HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT

A1-1101 Purpose and Intent

The Lake Anne Village Center Historic Overlay District is created to protect against destruction of the historic and architectural quality of the landmark; to encourage uses which will lead to its continuance, conservation, and improvement; and to assure that new uses within the district will be in keeping with the character to be preserved and enhanced.

A1-1102 Permitted, Special Permit, and Special Exception Uses

All uses permitted by right, special permit, and special exception for a village center in the PRC District.

A1-1103 Use Limitations

1. The provisions of Part 2 of Article 7 shall apply to all lands within the district.
2. All uses and development within this district shall be in strict accordance with the development policies and recommendations set forth in the adopted comprehensive plan and shown in the Reston Master Plan, adopted by reference in the Area III Plan.
3. Any new improvements, to include structures, signs, fences, street furniture, outdoor graphics, and public and private utilities shall be designed and installed as integral parts of the present village complex, and to be compatible with the original design.

A1-1104 Lot Size Requirement

No requirement for each use or building.

A1-1105 Bulk Regulation

1. Building height shall be compatible with the intent of the district.
2. Minimum yard requirements: The location and arrangement of structures shall not be detrimental to existing uses or prospective adjacent uses.

A1-1106 Maximum Density

As specified in the underlying zoning district.

A1-1107 Open Space

As specified in the underlying zoning district.

A1-1108 Additional Regulations

As specified in the underlying zoning district.

The Dedication of Reston.

"Childhood shows the man, as morning shows the day." And so it is with the young town Reston in the morning of its happening.

Reston is sturdy. Belief in the human potential governs its every innovation. 20th Century man can flourish when the vitality of urban invention combines with the ancient heritage of fertile land. Here, a man looks at a tall tower and a tree against the sky and knows that both mark the place of his home.

Reston is vigorous. Belief in the ferment between people and place is its strength. There is contentment and controversy in a town where each man matters. Here, people in ever-widening variety walk, work, watch a bird. They create their own life style, and by such creation make a valid community of men.

Reston is buoyant. Belief in excellence is its absolute standard. Artistry in surroundings lifts the spirit, sparks the imagination. Planning is its tool. Here, children run free to delight in a bridge, a wooded path. Water glints against brick, music sounds in the village, and men know a sense of joy.

Belief in people, in ferment among them and excellence around them, makes Reston sturdy, vigorous and buoyant. This is its promise. This is its dedication.

by Anne W. Simon May, 1966